

# LOUISIANA **Conservationist**

September/October 1986





J. Burton Angelle Sr., Secretary

**S**EPTEMBER IS ALWAYS a time of excitement for me as I look with anticipation on the upcoming hunting seasons. This is never more true than this year. The outlook for the upcoming seasons appears excellent. Nesting counts indicate an improved dove season while the fall flight of waterfowl is expected to be a full 20 percent higher than last year. The excellent mast crop last year means some mighty good squirrel hunting and it appears that we may be, weather permitting, looking at a record deer harvest.

Adding to my excitement this year is the knowledge that sportsmen of this state were willing, when it really counted, to step forward and volunteer to help foot the bill for the continued fisheries and wildlife management and conservation activities needed to insure that we will continue to enjoy such activities in the future.

The bottom line to this support is that hunters, trappers and recreational and commercial fishermen will begin to pay more for licenses to hunt, fish and trap. The new fees for hunting and trapping are effective this season, while the new commercial fishing license fees take effect January 1 and the new recreational fishing license fees July 1 of next year.

When all the new fees are in effect, the sportsmen and commercial fishermen and trappers of this state will,

for the first time, be paying the majority of the operating budget of this agency. No longer will our conservation efforts be overly dependent on the whims and fortunes of the oil and gas industry. With the new fees, the research and management programs of this department should be on a sound financial footing for some time to come.

The new fees and effective dates are contained in an article in this issue of the magazine detailing legislation approved by the 1986 Legislature that affects our wildlife and fisheries resources. I won't repeat that discussion here.

What I would like to do is two fold. The first is to offer my hearty thanks for your support and to ask you to keep in mind when you are purchasing your hunting and trapping licenses this year, that much of the success you enjoy in Louisiana today is a direct result of the activities of this department.

The second item on my agenda is a reaffirmation of my oft-stated pledge to be responsive to the will of those we serve. I think this department is already second to none when it comes to not only actively seeking the opinions and desires of those we serve, but also considering those opinions and desires when making decisions. I think this year's dove season with afternoon only hunting during the opening weekends of each split and all day hunting the rest of the time and the recent prohibition of goose creeping are two timely examples of this responsiveness.

But, as sportsmen and commercial fishermen and trappers begin to pay an ever larger portion of our budget, I believe they will increasingly demand to be assured they are getting their money's worth. This I intend to make an extra effort to do. Not only will I continue my vigilance against this agency becoming removed and unresponsive, but I intend to expand our communication efforts. We are going to make an increasing effort to let you know what we are doing and, at the same time, solicit your opinions.

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries exists solely to serve the people of Louisiana. To serve you best, we need your input. We have always welcomed and encouraged your input; we are now going to make an earnest effort to solicit it.

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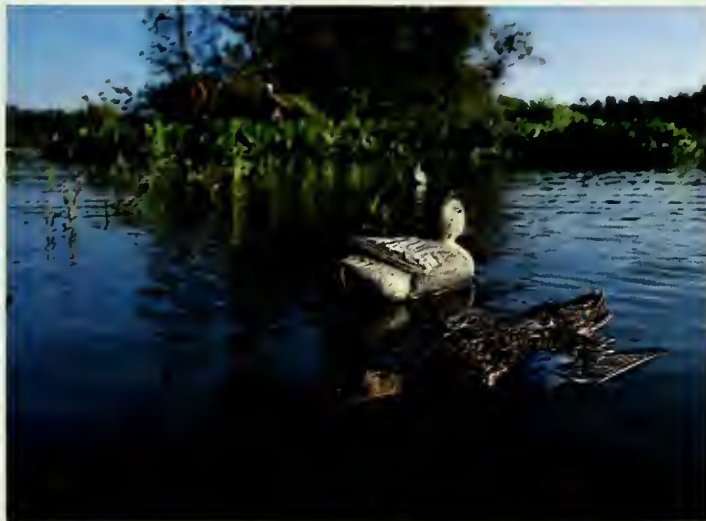
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## Dulac Double Header

By Maurice N. Cockerham  
Photography by Bill Ford

*"It's something the whole family enjoys... something we can share...and I figure you can't beat that. There's nothing more important than family."*

**"D**ADDY, I REALLY NEED TO DRIVE so I can get my merit badge." This from a tow-headed 11 year old who regularly pilots the boat, alone, from the family camp to the nearby fuel dock.

Merit badges, however, are a weighty matter. The expertise of the candidate must be witnessed and attested to by a responsible adult. That term is scoutese for "Daddy."

The spindly legged redhead at the helm cut the throttle and dutifully surrendered the pilot's seat so that the official requirements of the merit badge booklet of the Boy Scouts of America could be duly met.

We (Them and Us) were a fistful of miles below Dulac, La. in an area known as Cailou Bay. "Them"

included Neal Record, an insurance purveyor from Clinton, and a pair of pint-sized cyclones named Ben and Andy, aged 11 and 8 respectively.

Whilst Ben took his turn at the helm, Andy initiated another raid on the suffering food cooler. He stoutly maintained he desperately needed a cold drink. My own opinion, however, is that he was conducting an experiment to see just how quickly he could dispose of our two-day supply of ice.

"Us" was composed of yours truly and photographer Bill Ford. Ford was stretched out, sort of crumpled, really, in the bow of the 20 footer, oblivious to all about him.

I was about halfway between indolent contentment and pure ecstasy. After a month or so of being bottled up in a claustrophobic office, the opportunity to accompany a large portion of the Record family on a weekend aunt was a Godsend. Momma Record had elected to pass on this one, but she usually fills out the crew (and maintains some sort of order in the group's operations).

Our rather loosely laid plans were simple. Spend the weekend in the vicinity of Raccoon Point, a sand spit separating (barely) the Gulf of Mexico from the east end of Caillou Bay. Days would be given over to the pursuit of speckled trout and any other activities that came to mind. Night time would find us tiptoeing through the shallows, dodging sting rays and hunting flounder. Hopefully, we could even work in a few hours of shuteye.

This, gentle souls, is family fun at its very best. I often think that the Almighty had family outings in mind when he created the great outdoors, particularly Louisiana's cornucopia of outdoor opportunity.

Neal Record has no reservations. His acquisition of a small camp near the Reach Out Landing at Dulac and a stable, safe 20-foot outboard was altogether family oriented. It is a place where the entire family, including Grandpa Rex and Grandma June, can get away and make memories in what the new-fangled family counselors call "quality time."

"It's something the whole family enjoys," he says, "something we can share...and I figure you can't beat that. There's nothing more important than family."

On this trip the weather was cooperating beautifully. The skies were (mostly) clear and sunny, there was just enough breeze and the water was rolling gently. The occasional squall which gathered on the horizon invariably passed us at a comfortable distance.



Ben Record, age 11, takes a turn at the helm, while father, Neal, and younger brother Andy, 8, enjoy the ride to Raccoon Point.



Neal Record of Clinton, with one of many nice-sized spotted seatrout taken in the surf.

Following the 45-minute run down from the landing, we tried our luck on the speckled trout for a few hours. The fish were not cooperating with great vigor, but a few nice specimens were iced. A couple of hefty sheep-head topped off the take.

The youngsters soon turned their attention to other things. There was simply not enough action to suit young Andy, and Ben, who had returned from a scout trip to Alabama but the night before, was a bit fagged out.

Neal turned the bow toward Raccoon Point at the westernmost tip of the Isles Dernieres. En route, we decided that Bill and I would set up a tent camp on the sand spit and Neal and the sprouts would bunk on the boat anchored nearby.

As we neared the point, we spotted a number of pelicans soaring along the edge of the Gulf and the boys listened intently as I related how the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries had stocked the area with pelicans captured on Queen Bess Island near Grand Isle (*Louisiana Conservationist*, July/August 1984).

As the anchor hit bottom on the lee side of the point, the boys hit the water. Bill and I lugged our gear ashore and established a rough camp while Neal restored some order to the paraphernalia on the boat.

The waning hours of the afternoon found all of us waist deep in the surf rolling by the point, chunking plastic jigs and trying to keep our footing in a strong tidal flow.

Shortly before dusk, speckled trout began feeding voraciously. Virtually every cast produced a shining, flouncing fish. While not large, they were full of vinegar and battled fiercely. Many threw the hook and went their merry way as we grabbed at them, but a fair share finished the day at the end of a floating stringer.

As suddenly as it had started, the feeding period ended. Neal had the bug badly and elected to continue fishing for the occasional strike while Bill and I repaired to the shore for a sorely needed coffee break. The two-legged tornadoes were running the surf, building sand castles and exploring the little sand island.

The warm coffee and cool Gulf breeze reminded me that all this craziness started more than forty years ago and I felt an immediate urge to briefly renew acquaintance with my fine Browning sleeping bag.

Some 15 seconds later (actually an hour), a double

mantle Coleman lantern, complete with reflector shield and accompanied by the raucous crowing of two anxious young flounder giggers (giggists?) interrupted a dream concerning a 22-pound speckled trout and a friendly mermaid. Reality assaulted me.

Now friends, gigging flounders is a robust and entertaining pastime and can be quite productive. It does, however, include certain pitfalls which should be avoided. Read on.

The water was far from perfect this night. One needs clear and fairly calm waters. Several shifts in wind direction had stirred the bottom a bit so we were restricted to the very edge of the beach.

Neal wielded the Coleman, with his progeny on either side, while Bill and I tagged astern. Within minutes, Andy had bayed.

"Right there," he declared. "Gimme the gig." The point of the gig buried in the sand, the bottom exploded. Lesson number one—when you stick a hole in a flounder he is apt to kick up a fuss. If you don't put some pressure on the gig he'll kick free and be gone.

Old-hand Andy had no problem. Neal reached down, slipped his hand under the strange looking flatfish and caught the end of the gig. Number one went on the stringer.

We had a southern flounder, as opposed to a summer flounder or a Gulf flounder. The differences are technical. On the table they are quite the same. When you have a fish with a large, flat, oval-shaped body, a mouthful of teeth like a California beach bum and both eyes on the same (left) side of his head, you have yourself a flounder and a fine and hearty meal. Rejoice!

Flounder are meat eaters, like most salt water denizens, but are rather finicky feeders. Although they can be taken on hook and line all year, my nod has to go to gigging as THE method of preference.

You see, this weird looking critter likes to invade the shallows at night. There he will settle his slab-like body into the sand and wait patiently for some hapless sucker like a shrimp or small baitfish to happen by. ZAP! MUNCH! The flounder springs out to grab its prey and choke it down, teeth-hair-hide and all.

The average flounder goes maybe 18 inches and weighs a couple of pounds, but the state record is a 12-pound, 2-ounce monster taken in 1969.

We sashayed on down the beach, adding fish to the stringer. The man with the light plays it slowly from side to side as all hands watch for the telltale smooth oval in the sand. The size of the fish is obvious when its hiding place is spotted, so the smaller flounders are simply disregarded.

About a half dozen flounders down the beach Neal suddenly whispered one word that riveted our attention. "Sting ray." He was not lying, either.



Author and Neal Record with fine catch of trout taken in surf.



Shallow, clear, and fairly calm waters, a good lantern, a flounder gig and two anxious young fishermen add up to a lot of fun.

Right before us a round, brown ray about 18 inches across cruised through the shallows, his long, venomous tail clearly visible. I said at the onset that there are certain pitfalls in this game and the sting ray is in first place.

They, too, have the habit of lying up in the sand to await their supper. Unlike the flounder, however, the sting ray is well equipped to defend itself. At the end of that long, slender tail is to be found a barbed, bony stinger loaded with potent stuff.

The luckless wader who steps on a buried sting ray will likely be punished immediately as the tail whips up to bury that tine in the foot or leg. End of fun...pain and suffering are at hand.

The answer to the problem is a sharp eye and a foot-shuffling gait rather than "high-stepping" across the bottom.

Little did I know it, but the brush with that sting ray was destined to upset the sardines, crackers and pickles I had eaten.

Within five minutes of our encounter, I managed to step squarely on a flounder buried in the sand. Now, the flounder has no defensive weapon with which to strike back. It simply endures such indignities and attempts to escape. This is accompanied by a swirl of sand, a very squishy feeling underfoot and a general rhubarb on the bottom.

I, of course, was still thinking sting ray. An intensely cold feeling shot up my spine, my sardines came to life and I had an immediate vision of spending the remainder of my life on a Captain-Ahab-style peg leg. Try as I might, I could not raise my foot. I simply levitated clear of the surface and the flounder floundered indignantly away.

The entire assemblage had a great laugh, save myself. I could gleefully have drowned them all. In retaliation, I spent the rest of the excursion shuffling along behind everyone else.

The next morning produced another run of speckled trout. Not as plentiful as the school of the preceding evening, they were somewhat larger and more determined battlers.

By the time the action subsided, it was time to break camp and tote our gear back to the waiting boat. Young Ben declared he intended to drive the boat, Andy looked up from yet another raid on the ice chest to demand equal time and we were, regrettably, on the way home.

As Raccoon Point faded behind with its pelicans and speckled trout and flounders and sting rays, Bill Ford once again assumed his beloved prone position.

Ben and Andy slowed their activity level by a barely perceptible amount, then collapsed totally. There was a happy weariness on their sunburned faces...a happiness that reflected brightly in Neal Record's eyes.



Photograph by Steve Dorand



Photograph by G. L. Twiest



# Deadly Rabies: It Wears a Disguise

By Bob Sheldon

*Although most people would recognize and retreat before its more dramatic symptoms, it often dons a masquerade. Rabies Awareness Week, Nov. 8-15, is designed to counteract that trickery.*

**T**AME AS A FURPIECE, the red fox trots right up close and allows you to stroke its silky-smooth coat. Wouldn't it make a stunning pet?

The kids spot a baby skunk. It seems to have lost its mommy. Take it home, they implore; they'll nurse it with an eyedropper.

You've finally slapped a cardboard box over that pesky bat in the garage. Susie will earn an A with it at show-and-tell.

"No way!" exclaims Dr. Martha A. Littlefield, prominent Baton Rouge veterinarian.

She used those precise words to a man who came into her office carrying a bat imprisoned in a box. He wanted it checked over before his daughter displayed it in a science classroom full of children.



**Dr. Martha A. Littlefield shows a Baton Rouge youngster how she vaccinates pets against rabies. She's helping promote a Nov. 8-15 observance of Rabies Awareness Week on a statewide level.**

Exercising her prerogatives, Dr. Littlefield confiscated the bat, euthanized it and sent the head to a laboratory for examination. She was not surprised by the result.

The bat had rabies.

So might a fox or squirrel or any other wild creature that acts "friendly." Remember this: Whenever an animal behaves in a way you wouldn't expect it to behave, it may be sick.

As for orphaned skunks and other little loners, they may be without a mother because she wandered off and succumbed to rabies. Don't pick them up. Leave them in the wilds where they belong. It's not only good sense. In Louisiana, it's the law.

Rabies is a death-dealing disease but one that can be kept under control. Although most people would recognize and retreat before its more dramatic symptoms, it often

does a masquerade. Rabies Awareness Week, scheduled in Louisiana for Nov. 8-15, is designed to counteract that trickery.

During the week, the Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association will conduct a program of public education in cooperation with schools, clubs, physicians and health authorities.

Dr. Littlefield says emphasis will be placed on the danger of rabies infection from wildlife and the necessity for immunization of pet dogs and cats.

Among participating agencies, the Education Section of the state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries will furnish lecturers for gatherings of schoolchildren, sportsmen and other groups.

Owing to its varied symptoms, rabies can be classed among diseases as one of the "great imitators,"

according to Dr. Harry V. Hagstad of LSU's School of Veterinary Medicine. In both animals and humans, rabies can take either a "street" form or a "dumb" form.

The street form displays the familiar symptoms exploited in horror movies, Dr. Hagstad says. A victim in the last stages may become violent, froth at the mouth, bite without provocation.

On the other hand, in the dumb variety, the rabid creature is quiescent. It may be partly blind and may approach or follow a human. Its bizarre behavior should serve as a warning.

In all cases, the victims are feverish and suffering extreme thirst, but the throat is swollen and swallowing is difficult if not impossible. This condition gives rise to rabies' other name, hydrophobia, which means dread of water.

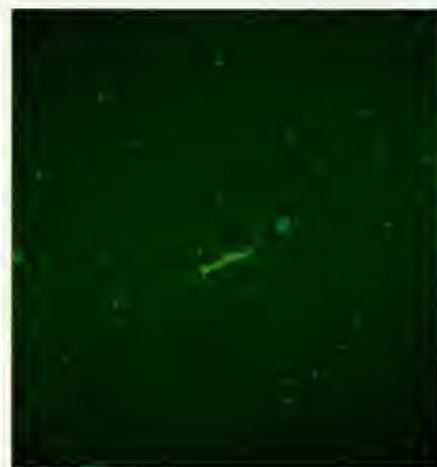
Like polio and tuberculosis, rabies among humans now is under tight control, but it remains a "powder keg," in the opinion of Dr. W. Sheldon Bivin, director of laboratory animal medicine at LSU.

Wild animals are the main carriers of rabies in the United States. It can be transmitted to dogs, cats, horses and cows and thence to people, so Dr. Bivin counsels constant watchfulness in the presence of animals, especially insofar as children are concerned.

All mammals are susceptible to the rabies virus, of which there are several strains that may selectively attack one species or another.

Skunks have been a problem in the Alexandria area, and bats in Baton Rouge. Raccoons, which adapt readily to urban living, are currently plaguing Washington, D.C., after trekking up from Florida and Georgia.

The rabies virus lives in the saliva of an infected animal and is usually passed on through a bite. But be careful—you don't have to be bitten to contract rabies. If you have a cut or open sore, you can pick up the virus by petting an animal that has licked itself.



David Burkart, left, pathology associate at LSU School of Veterinary Medicine, prepares brain specimen for examination for rabies. No rabies this time, decides Rob Poston, center, associate virologist at LSU, after carefully checking specimen with microscope. Magnified 400 times, photo at right is what a cutting taken from a rabid mammalian brain looks like. Bright speckled areas are a giveaway.

For safety's sake, any unvaccinated animal that bites is presumed to be rabid. If the animal is killed, its head should be taken to a veterinarian or health official, who will send it to a laboratory to be analyzed for telltale brain lesions. If someone's pet bites you, it needn't be destroyed, but it must be surrendered for 10 days of observation.

Persons bitten by a diseased animal receive an injection of serum followed by vaccine shots over a period of weeks.

Treatment is expensive not only for the individual, because any suspected outbreak of rabies immediately mobilizes public health agencies and may cost millions of dollars in the process.

Fortunately, that doesn't happen often in the United States any more. In 1952, there were 24 known cases of rabies in human beings. By 1974, there were no such cases at all, thanks mainly to a vigorously pursued campaign of pet vaccination.

There were no cases again in 1980 and none in 1982. But in 1983, the last year for which national statistics are available, there were three cases. Two of those three people were infected not in this country but some place abroad.

In 1983, more than 85,000 animals were examined for rabies. Of the

nearly 5,900 found to have it, wildlife was in the vast majority. Skunks were the worst offenders, then raccoons and bats.

Domestic animals trailed far behind, with 284 rabid farm animals counted along with 168 cats and 132 dogs. In this, the United States with its vaccination program is untypical. On a worldwide basis, dogbite causes 90 percent of the rabies in humans.

You'll notice, too, that in America cats were even more likely to be infected than dogs. One reason is that the average family pooch enjoys settling permanently into an easy-chair lifestyle. Not cats. They remain hunters by instinct, and the most fastidious angora is apt to tangle with a rat or squirrel.

Authorities are keeping an eye on two developments in the rabies situation in Louisiana.

The first is a rise in rabies cases from 31 in 1983 to 67 in 1984. The latter total comprises 49 skunks, 15 bats and three cats.

A second ominous fact is that most of the cases occurred in the western half of Louisiana, and our immediate neighbor on that side, Texas, had 720 rabies cases in 1984. The Texas cases were concentrated in the eastern half of that state.

Though generally slow-acting,

untreated rabies in human beings is invariably fatal. To be successful, any prevention program must have the unqualified participation of citizens in all walks of life.

Remember those three cases reported in 1983? One involved a 5-year-old Michigan child. While the rabies virus was ravaging her body, doctors were baffled by her "masked" symptoms. Her parents recalled too late that she had been bitten months before by a bat. She died.

## Protect Yourself And Your Pets

- **Have your dog or cat vaccinated at 3 months of age, and get annual boosters. It's the law in Louisiana. It's also cheap insurance.**
- **Obey the leash and licensing ordinances in your community.**
- **Don't keep wild animals without legal permits from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. They make poor, and risky, pets.**
- **Report stray animals to health authorities.**
- **If bitten, wash the affected area thoroughly. Then see a doctor, even if it's just a minor wound.**

# There Are Teal...and then there are teal

By Maurice N. Cockerham

Photography by Bill Ford



*There are those who will tell you that the "big ducks" in Louisiana are the big ducks...the mallards and pintails and the like. It jist ain't so.*

**T**HE LITTLE DUCK was as good as in the pot the moment he appeared, flying low and slow and straight over the waist high three-cornered grass of the marsh. "Just a wee bit closer," I told myself. He crossed the invisible line I had drawn across the marsh to mark my shooting zone. This little game was over.

As I rose from my makeshift blind, thigh-deep in the ooze of the brackish mud flat, the over and under slipped along my cheek to nestle its butt in the pocket of my shoulder. The muzzle swept gracefully up behind the bird and...

Now, I know as well as the next fool that all makes and models of ducks have sharp eyes and sharper reflexes. I've seen the critters jump upwards, downwards and backwards in mid-air to avoid a charge of shot, but this fellow was not depending on fancy footwork to keep his tail feathers intact.

When I started my swing, he was loafing along at maybe thirty miles an hour. Just strolling in the world of teal. Before the muzzle could catch him, he kicked in the afterburners and headed for Mississippi, or some other foreign country. No twisting or turning or diving. Just gone...right now...in an unbelievable burst of speed. He reminded me of an F-16 pilot headed for three days of R&R in Sin City.

He left behind a sweaty, thoroughly astounded hunter whose visions of roast duck evaporated into a mental image of Spam sandwiches and cold French fries.

There are teal...and then there are teal.

This is a waterfowling state. Louisiana nurtures about one hundred and twenty five thousand eccentric "wing

nuts" who brave the most atrocious weather and flounder through the most odious muck and ooze just to shoot holes in the air on the off chance that a duck might fly into their shot pattern. All this adds up to a tidy profit for L. L. Bean and Eddie Bauer and shotshell moguls and Mr. Faulk and all those other folks who are sharp enough to recognize a flock of suckers when they see one.

As a result of this whimsical waterfowl wildness, more than fifty million bucks circulate through Louisiana's economy each year. I can attest that a bunch of it goes for Spam and spuds, too.

There are those who will tell you that the "big ducks" in Louisiana are the big ducks...mallards and pintails and the like. It jist ain't so. The number one duck, Gentle Soul, is the teal. Blue winged and green winged varieties combined, the little duck is number one on the wing, number one in the bag and number one on the table.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service reports that teal comprise about 30 percent of Louisiana's harvest during the regular duck hunting season. Mallards and gadwall are in second place with about 16 percent each. So, there!

Biologist Robert Helm is the Waterfowl Study Leader for the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

"Blue winged teal make up about 90 percent of the migratory teal flights through Louisiana, during the late summer and early fall.

"The twisting, turning flight of both species can help identify teal. Green winged teal tend to bunch up more in flight and skew around more than the blue winged. Then too, green winged teal of both sexes flash a white belly during flight. Blue winged males have a darker belly and the females have a lighter colored brown belly.

"Of course, the wing patches are the most prominent identification factors. Some hunters get confused because both species have a green colored speculum, or trailing edge, on their wings. Blue winged teal get their name from a chalky blue area on the top of the wing, just forward of the speculum."

"Finally, the green winged teal is slightly smaller and slightly faster than the blue winged variety, but for hunting purposes that's really splitting hairs."

Helm also cautions hunters to learn to distinguish between teal and other small ducks.

"Shovelers seem to give hunters trouble, particularly during the early season and there is a similarity of wing coloration. You simply have to learn to look for the shoveler's slightly larger body size and its broad 'spoon' bill."

There are a few resident birds. That is, a very few teal remain in Louisiana all year and do not migrate. The great majority, however, congregate in the prairie pothole regions to attend to the business of reproduction. Although they will move as far north as the Canadian provinces regularly, large numbers will "short-stop" in more southerly pothole areas if weather conditions are acceptable.

In teal language, that means plenty of water in the potholes, which translates into dense cover and abundant food nearby. In drought years, which the Dakotas have seen with severity recently, the birds continue into Canada to set up house.

In mid-summer, nature's most pressing urge has been satiated. Although females are busy with broods of ducklings, the males are unencumbered and another urge begins to be felt. Even though the birds are molting and the new plumage is not fully intact, large numbers of males are impatient to begin the southward trek to wintering grounds in Mexico and Central and South America.





Photo by Mark Saltz

The first flights arrive in Louisiana during mid-August. Blue winged teal are earlier migrators than their green winged cousins. Those enthralled by numbers will be interested to know that blue winged teal account for more than 90 percent of the early flights and, of those, from 70 to 80 percent are males.

The migrating flocks hold tickets to more southerly climes, with Louisiana's lush wetlands listed only as a stop-over for groceries and a bit of rest before crossing the open Gulf or following the Texas coastline. They aren't about to take up residence here.

That fact provides Louisiana waterfowlers with one of our most popular hunting events...the September Teal Season.

The fabled (among waterfowlers) Nine Days In September had its beginning in the 1950s. Studies by the (then) Wild Life and Fisheries Commission showed that a great multitude of blue winged teal passed through the state well in advance of the regular waterfowl season. They didn't hang around, so waterfowlers did not get an opportunity to hunt this early migration trekking to the southern latitudes. They simply were unutilized.

The first seasons were held in 1965, '66 and '67 with 20 states in the Central and Mississippi Flyways participating. They were labeled "experimental," and closely monitored by both federal and state waterfowl experts.

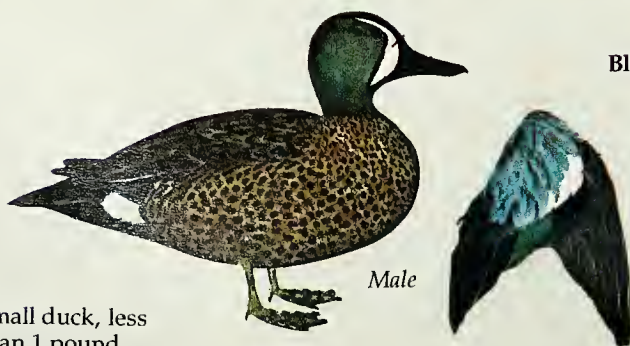
There was no evidence of adverse effect on the continental teal population and the season was productive and extremely popular with hunters.

"Just as an isolated bit of information," Helm offered, "The teal populations represent exceptions to the serious decline in North American puddle duck numbers in recent years. Habitat destruction and drought have severely affected the prairie nesting species, but the teal are apparently holding their own better than the others."

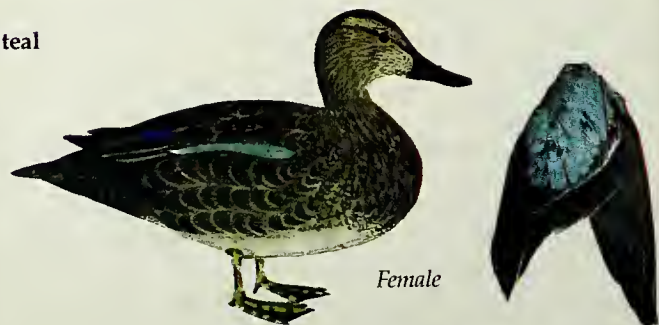
For the nimrod setting out to tap a teal or two, the preparations are simple. Teal like shallow, fairly open areas. They feed primarily on seeds of plants such as smartweed, spike rush, sedges and millet, and eat parts of some submerged plants.

They are not much of a "woods" duck, but it is not uncommon to find them hanging around with mallards

### Blue-winged teal



Male



Female

Small duck, less than 1 pound, 12-16 inches long.

Louisiana Conservationist

and other brands in timbered swamps during the regular waterfowl season.

Never mind trying to call them. It can be done but, what the heck! They decoy easily, especially during the early season before they have been shot at a lot.

Note that I said "shot at a lot." They are shot at much more than they are shot. Despite the fact that literally millions of the buggers pass through the Pelican State, the hunter success rate is something like 1.5 birds per hunter effort. That has to tell you something about hitting the quick little suckers.

You may need a raft of pintail decoys to get a glance from a pintail, but the teal will bomb in on any decoys. They usually land on the outer edges of the spread, so plan your shooting zones accordingly. Then too, they frequently make one or more low passes over a spread, just to check it out, even when they have no intention of getting their feet wet.

As concerns the shooting itself, carry along lots of shells. Occasionally, you will encounter the loafer described at the beginning of this treatise. More often, you will marvel at a twisting, swooping, corkscrewing flight pattern. The bird's small size and amazing speed (they can hit 70 mph!) are enough to bumfuzzle even the experienced wingshot. Sound advice is to double the lead you think you need.

Heaven, of course, is catching a group coming in to inspect the decoys, carefully picking your shot, and waiting until two birds cross paths. Bingo! You score a double with a single shot. That was a favorite trick of my Dad's back when the bag limits were a bit more liberal than they are today. Nowadays, that stunt accounts for about half of your limit!

Most of the birds visiting Louisiana are to be found in the southwestern part of the state. Flooded agricultural fields (rice fields) attract large numbers, and open flats and potholes of the coastal marsh do the same.

Elsewhere, Toledo Bend sees its rightful share, as do most of the lakes along the western side of the state.

Catahoula Lake, in LaSalle Parish, is a fantastic mecca for teal, just as it is for bigger ducks during the season.

This is not to say that there are no teal to be had in the southeastern part of the state. The Mississippi River Delta and the southeastern coastal marshes attract

large numbers. Great shooting is readily available for those who locate the game.

It certainly helps to scout before the season begins, but with teal, here today certainly does not mean here tomorrow.

Shortly after the shooting (or non-shooting) episode related at the opening of this article, a flight of three blue wings zipped in and landed just twenty yards away. As I rose from the mire and shouldered my gun, they launched themselves going straight away. A brightly colored male filled my limit for the day.

As I wallowed back to the carefully hidden boat to rejoin photographers Bill Ford and Mark Saltz, I noticed the water level had dropped alarmingly.

Those characters had not even noticed they had finished out their limits shooting from a rock-steady platform. We were solidly aground!

One thing you must watch for when hunting the shallow flats preferred by teal is an outgoing tide. By the time we pulled that little Jon Boat a quarter of a mile across the mud in sunny, 85 degree weather, that lesson was well-earned and well-learned!

The 1986 September Teal Season begins at sunrise on Saturday, September 20. It will close at sunset on Sunday, September 28. Shooting hours are from official sunrise (NOT 1/2 hour before sunrise) to official sunset with a daily bag of four and a possession limit of eight. A hunting license and federal waterfowl stamp are required.

Be forewarned, however, that teal hunting is highly addictive. Hot weather, mosquitoes, mud...it's all worth it. You see, there are teal...and then there are teal.

**WARNING**—Check the "official" times, friend. Early and late shooting account for most of the citations issued. Note, also, that the legal shooting hours for rails and gallinules have been changed this year, during the September Teal Season only, to coincide with the "sunrise to sunset" rule. So, any excuse for early shooting will go unheeded. Learn to identify your ducks, too! Shooting "big" ducks during the **TEAL ONLY** season is the number two reason game wardens get writer's cramp.

Smallest of puddle ducks, about 1/4 pound, up to 14 inches long.

Green-winged teal

Male

Female

# LOUISIANA HUNTING SEASONS 1986-1987

*"Respect the Landowner"*

## RESIDENT GAME BIRDS AND ANIMALS

Shooting Hours

One Half Hour Before Sunrise To One Half Hour After Sunset

**QUAIL:** November 27-February 28. Daily bag limit 10, possession 20.

**SQUIRREL:** October 4-January 18. Daily bag limit 8, possession 16.

**RABBIT:** October 4-February 28. Daily bag limit 8, possession 16.

**BEAR:** November 8-November 16. One per day, one per season. See schedule for open area.

**RACCOON AND OPOSSUM:** No closed season. Raccoon and opossum can be taken at night by one or more licensed hunters with one or more dogs and one .22 rimfire rifle. A licensed hunter may take raccoon or opossum with .22 rimfire rifle or shotgun during daylight hours during the open squirrel season. No bag limit during open trapping season. Remainder of year, bag limit is one per person per day or night. No one shall pelt or sell skins or carcasses of raccoons or opossums taken during the trapping season unless he is the holder of a valid trappers license in addition to a basic hunting license.

**CROWS, BLACKBIRDS** are considered depredators in Louisiana and may be taken year round during legal shooting hours.

**COMMERCIAL HUNTING PRESERVES:** October 1-April 30; pen reared birds only.

## DEER HUNTING SCHEDULE

Bag limit is one legal deer per day, six per season. Hunting is restricted to legal bucks only, except where specifically permitted. A legal buck is a deer with visible antler of hardened bony material, broken naturally through the skin. Either-sex deer is defined as male or female deer. The taking of spotted fawns is prohibited.

It is illegal to hunt or shoot deer with firearms smaller than .22 caliber centerfire or a shotgun loaded with anything other than buckshot or rifled slug. Handguns and muzzleloaders are permitted.

Pursuing, driving or hunting of deer with dogs during the still hunting season is prohibited.

**ARCHERY SEASON:** Still hunting only, October 1-January 20 statewide, unless otherwise restricted on WMA's. Either sex deer may be taken in all areas open for deer hunting. Where a buck only season is in progress for gun hunting, however, archers must conform to the bucks only regulations, including WMA's. Bow and arrow regulations: Hunting arrows for deer must have well-sharpened metal broadhead blades not less than 7/16 in. width. Bow and arrow fishermen must have a sports fishing license and not carry any arrows with broadheads.

## MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

**DOVES:** There is a statewide 70 day, three-part season: Sept. 6-14, Oct. 18-Nov. 30, and Dec. 13-29. Bag limit is 12—possession 24.

**TEAL:** Sept. 20-Sept. 28. Bag limit is 4 and possession limit is 8. *Teal only.* Shooting hours are sunrise to sunset. Waterfowl stamp is required.

**DUCKS:** West Zone: Nov. 8-Nov. 30 and Dec. 20-Jan. 10. (45 days) East Zone: Nov. 22-Dec. 1 and Dec. 20-Jan. 18. (40 days) The north-south line separating the east and west zones of the state will run from the Arkansas state line south on La. Hwy. 3 to Bossier City, then east on Interstate Hwy. 20 to Minden, south on La. Hwy. 7 to Ringgold, east on La. Hwy. 4 to Jonesboro, then south on U.S. Hwy. 167 to Lafayette, then southeast along U.S. Hwy. 90 to Houma, then south along the Houma Navigational Canal to the Gulf. **POINT SYSTEM:** 20 Point Class: Gadwall, Shoveler, Wigeon, Scaup, Blue-Winged Teal, Green-Winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Red-Breasted Merganser, American Merganser. 35 Point Class: Pintail, Mallard Drake, Mottled Duck, Ring Neck Duck, all other ducks not listed. 70 Point Class: Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Redhead. 100 Point Class: Black Duck, Mallard Hen. Daily limit is 100 points total.

**Season Closed for Canvasback.**

**SCAUP:** (SPECIAL SEASON): Open only in designated areas (See 1986-87 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations). Jan. 15-30. Daily bag limit 5. Possession limit 10.

**COOTS:** Season will run concurrent with the duck seasons in both zones of the state, with a daily bag limit of 15 and a possession limit of 30.

**GEESE:** West Zone: Nov. 8-Nov. 30 and Dec. 20-Feb. 4. (70 days) East Zone: Nov. 22-Jan. 30. (70 days) Limit for geese is 5 daily, with not more than two White-fronted (Specklebellies) geese in bag. Possession limit is 10, with not more than four White-fronted geese. Shooting of Canada Geese in Louisiana remains closed.

**Goose "creeping" prohibited.** It is unlawful to "creep, stalk or crawl toward feeding or resting geese for the purpose of taking such geese or therein after causing such geese to be taken."

**RAILS:** Sept. 20-28 and Nov. 8-Jan. 7. Bag limit on King and Clapper Rails is 15. Possession limit is 30. Bag limit on Sora and Virginia Rails is 25 in the aggregate, which is also the possession limit.

**GALLINULES:** Sept. 20-28 and Nov. 8-Jan. 7. Daily bag limit is 15. Possession Limit is 30.

**SNIPE:** Nov. 8-Feb. 22. Bag limit is 8. Possession limit is 16.

**WOODCOCK:** Dec. 6-Feb. 8. Bag limit is 5. Possession limit is 10.

**SHOOTING HOURS:**

WOODCOCK SEASON: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset.  
(3) Ducks (including scaup season, coots): 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset.  
(4) Geese: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset.  
(5) Doves: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset EXCEPT Noon to sunset on Sept. 6-7, Oct. 18-19 and Dec. 13-14.

Use of bait and live decoys prohibited. Duck and goose hunters 16 and older must have federal waterfowl stamp in addition to valid hunting license. Use of rifles, or shotguns larger than 10 gauge or capable of holding more than three shells prohibited.

DEER HUNTING SCHEDULE

|        |                                                                                                          |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area 1 | Still hunting only: Nov 22-30<br>With or without dogs: Dec. 6-Jan. 18                                    |
| Area 2 | Still hunting only: Nov. 8-30<br>With or without dogs: Dec. 6-14<br>With or without dogs: Dec. 20-Jan. 4 |
| Area 3 | Still hunting only: Nov. 8-30<br>With or without dogs: Dec. 6-14<br>With or without dogs: Dec. 20-Jan. 4 |
| Area 4 | Still hunting only: Nov. 8-30<br>Still hunting only: Dec. 6-14<br>Still hunting only: Dec. 20-Jan. 4     |
| Area 5 | Still hunting only: Nov. 22-30<br>Still hunting only: Dec. 6-14<br>Still hunting only: Dec. 20-Jan. 11   |

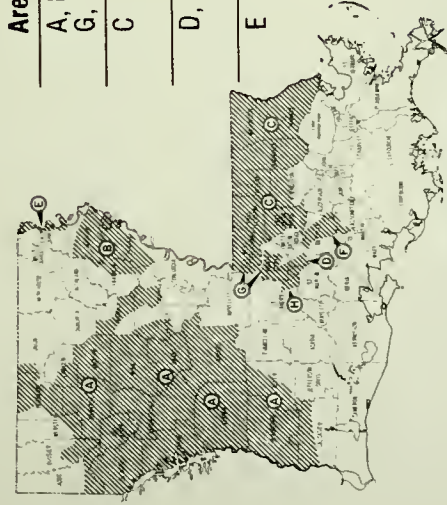


EITHER SEX HUNTING: See Louisiana Hunting, Fishing and Motorboat Regulations 1986-87.

1986 TURKEY SEASON

Daily limit one gobbler; three per season. Still hunting only. Big Game License required in addition to basic Hunting License. Dogs, baiting, live decoys and electronic calling devices are illegal. May be hunted with shotguns using shot not larger than size #2 or with bow and arrow but by no other means. Shooting from vehicles prohibited.

| Area         | Open Season           |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| A, B<br>G, H | March 21-<br>April 19 |
| C            | March 21-<br>April 26 |
| D, F         | March 14<br>April 19  |
| E            | April 4-30            |



LICENSES AND PERMITS

HUNTING LICENSES: (All Basic Licenses exclude Big Game - Deer, Bear and Tur- key hunting).

- (1) RESIDENT: (Basic License Required to Obtain Big Game License)
  - (a) Basic Season (Excluding Bear, Deer & Turkey) ..... \$10.50
  - (b) Big Game (Required for Bear, Deer and Turkey, in addition to Basic License) ..... \$10.50
  - (c) Archery Hunting License (Needed in addition to Licenses required by law) ..... \$10.50
  - (d) Combination Hunting and Big Game ..... \$21.00
  - (e) Combination: Basic Fishing, Saltwater Fishing, Basic Hunting and Big Game ..... \$29.00
- (2) NON-RESIDENT: (Basic License Required to Obtain Big Game License)
  - (a) Basic Season (Excluding Bear, Deer & Turkey) ..... \$75.00
  - (b) Basic 3-Day Trip (Excluding Bear, Deer & Turkey) ..... \$40.50
  - (c) Big Game (Required for Bear, Deer & Turkey, in addition to Basic License) ..... \$40.50
  - (d) Archery License ..... \$10.50
  - (e) 3-day Migratory Game Bird ..... \$25.00

Residents and non-residents under sixteen years of age and residents sixty years of age and older who have resided within the state for two years prior to application are not required to obtain licenses. Proof of age must be carried. Residents of Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida will pay the same to hunt in Louisiana that Louisiana residents pay to hunt in their state. Military personnel on active duty shall be given resident privilege.

COMMERCIAL HUNTING PRESERVE LICENSE  
(Pen Raised Birds) ..... \$200.00

HELP STOP POACHING  
1-800-442-2511

Call Operation Game Thief's toll-free hotline any time of day or night.  
Remember a poacher is stealing from you.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES  
P.O. BOX 15570 · BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70895

HUNTER EDUCATION CERTIFICATION LAW: All applicants for a Louisiana Hunting License born on or after September 1, 1969 are required to satisfactorily complete a Hunter Education Course approved by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries before purchasing a license. PROOF OF CERTIFICATION must be presented at time of license purchase.



**Profile of a Hunter**

By Sara Ann Harris  
Photography by Guy LaBranche

*Just as Lydia had inherited a hunter's ethic and a ritual in the woods from her father, her son Tommy Lee "came into" her respect for life in the wild and the understanding that all life was part of the same whole.*

**"I** RECKON I WAS born to hunt," Lydia Ramage of Bastrop, Louisiana explained as she walked along the blacktop road, a hiking stick in one hand and a 12-gauge shotgun underneath her arm. It was the last day of deer season and her eighty-first birthday. So appropos that a woman raised in the outdoors on farming, milking cows and goats, and hunting would celebrate by visiting familiar stalks.

With a clear gaze, a willingness to chuckle, and a knack for spinning a country yarn, she managed to command our attention without ever raising her voice. Red Man tucked in her cheek, between chews she spoke of hunts gone by. Over three years she had recognized the same buck. "It was the biggest deer I'd ever seen. It was as big as a cow." After convincing her taxidermist son Tommy Lee that she wasn't just telling him a tale, they hunted the thing and brought home a 225-pound buck. Tommy has the fourteen point trophy deer mounted on his living room wall. Then there was the time Jess, her husband and long-time hunting companion, had yearned for one more successful hunt before his death. His wish was granted.



Lydia Ramage is completely at home in the woods.



**William Burrell Lee and his daughter Lydia, who at an early age picked up his love of the outdoors.**

We crushed down the leaves as we broke from the road into the hardwood stand. After scanning the area, she picked a spot overlooking a ravine downwind from us. Her grandson Rick, now a young man, glanced my way, "She's a cat." I gathered he was addressing her quick wits in the woods and her somewhat eccentric nature. "What is the name of that creek south of here, granny?" he interjected following up on an inquiry from me. It wasn't uncommon apparently for Lydia's clan to question her about the natural features of these woods. We quieted ourselves. Deer hunting is a waiting game. As comfortable as Lydia Ramage obviously was out there her "wait," it seemed, could never have been contaminated by impatience.

The outdoors had been Lydia's life. Daughter of William Burrell Lee and Martha Smith, she grew up with nine brothers and sisters on a farm. Though the other girls had house-keeping chores, Lydia remembers,

"I'd rather been out chopping wood or feeding horses or cows or hogs than to stay at the house." ... "Every time my Daddy left, my sister would say let's go ride the goat. I'd ride the goat and she would go around. One time daddy got back early and caught me ridin' the old billy goat and we got our tails tore up. That's the only whimpin' my daddy ever gave me. He said that thing could've hooked me to death."

On their property William Lee hunted opossum, cats and quail. Lydia said, "At six years old I was the bird dog." She practiced shooting, later, at "pecker woods" while at the same time protecting the hen house from intruders. Rabbit, squirrel, wild pigs, wolves—of the whole lot of children it was Lydia and brother Abner who hunted these with their dad. And at 16 she made her first solo trip.

Every family member could handle a gun. William Lee demanded that all of his girls learn to shoot a shotgun and a pistol. He was adamant about the girls protecting themselves and cautioned them about kidnapping and "white slavery."

Then as a grown woman Lydia married a hunter—William Jess Ramage. "We was from one thing to another. We had to make a living. We made it honest and square by working." After running a boat landing, they bought 42 acres to farm. There, besides successful quail hunting, they took up training dogs. The neighbors were impressed with how well their animals listened, so they brought their delinquent pups over and the word spread about their training ability. For formal instruction, the Ramages purchased a book on the subject, but the success sprang from their attitude toward the faithful curs. "The book said if you didn't have more sense than the dog not to undertake training a dog. And there's a lot of truth in that, too. And that's the reason so many people can't make a dog do what they want it to do. They haven't got sense enough to talk kind to it and pay it for whatever it does."

On that birthday afternoon, we settled in amidst several close trees on a strategic rise. It looked like any other spot in the woods to me, but Lydia explained that a hunter picks up on signs which indicate that deer have passed recently: a leaf pushed down just so, an identifying track or a crossing from one feeding area to another. Deer browse, she continued, on honeysuckle, pine needles, cedar seeds and leaves of the cotton plant. So it only makes sense to hunt near these and keep an eye out for clues of a recent repast. I sat alert beside the seasoned hunter in her blaze orange vest and cap and eyed the clearing.

I turned over in my mind the stories she had recounted of her hunts as a married woman. There was actually a time when she *didn't* hunt. While she raised three children (Mary Ruth, Bobby and Tommy Lee) she slacked off. But it wasn't too long before she was back out, with Mary Ruth strapped to her back, stepping deftly through the woods. She was proud of the fact that she had hunted in one of the very first deer seasons in Mississippi in 1949. And from the way she talked it was clear she and Jess approached the sport like only the best. "The way we worked was I'd be in my stand and he'd go on a half mile further somewhere else, you see. But I always waited 'til he came back regardless. I was a wonderin' if he was in trouble or he was a wonderin' if I was. He'd usually whistle when he went to leavin' his stand, you see, and when he went to whistlin', then I knew he was on his way."

As Lydia's children grew up, it was Tommy Lee (named for his grandfather) who took to this lifestyle. Just as Lydia had inherited a hunting ethic and a ritual in the woods from her father, Tommy Lee "came into" the same respect for life in the wild and an understanding that all life was part of the same whole. Young Tommy's interest in animals took a practical turn toward taxidermy. His mom sold a string of catfish so she could buy the thirteen year old a

book on the subject. Well, before long mounted chickens were all over the house, along with blue jays and woodpeckers. "He could mount a chicken and make it look like it was popping up its wings and ready to crow." Though he made a living as an electrical engineer, later Tommy found success setting up his own taxidermy shop in Bastrop. The art in taxidermy is in rendering a life-like representation of the animal be it coyote, elk, wood duck, deer or bass. It goes past snugly fitting a hide onto the mold even to attending to the very expression in an animal's eyes. His efforts, we noted, on a later visit to his business, were amply rewarded with trophies and ribbons from such organizations as the Louisiana Taxidermy Association and the National Taxidermy Association—Southeast Region.

Taking a break from our afternoon hunt, Lydia whispered yet another anecdote to me as it apparently sidled across the viewfinder of her mind. Once hunting with her, Tommy Lee pursued a deer that crossed a nearby river after Lydia had shot it. "My family, they would go wild if they didn't get it. They know'd he was dying, you see. They (deer) will fight 'til the last breath, you know. They are *too* strong. But still it was sad to think (about a deer if just left when wounded). When we hunted we always tried for a quick, clean shot." Rather than leave the deer disabled, Tommy crossed the river by flatboat and caught up with the animal to bring it home after hours in the woods.

As dusk closed the light out of the countryside like a book folding shut, we climbed back up the road to start for home. At dinner there were good wishes and gifts, but surely the event to commemorate the day had already passed—a rich reverie at which we had had front row seats off of that back road.

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**Lydia Ramage crafts a deer hide wall hanging.**



# Capitol Highlights



By Wade Byrd

**T**HE CRISIS-LIKE atmosphere that permeated the 1986 regular session of the Louisiana Legislature extended to consideration of a multitude of measures affecting our wildlife and fisheries resources and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

The department which operates totally on self-generated funds was in the grips of the most devastating financial crisis in its history and was faced with either substantially reducing programs and personnel or generating additional monies. Additionally, interest in our coastal fisheries resources, especially redfish, was at an almost fevered pitch.

What follows is a brief recap of major legislative action affecting our wildlife and fisheries resources that resulted from the session.

## Hunting, Fishing and Motorboat Registration Fees

The monies generated by hunting, fishing and motorboat registration fees go into the Conservation Fund from which the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is partially funded. These fees were increased to offset reductions in department mineral revenues caused both by falling oil prices and a long-term decline in production on department-owned land.

The new fees are contained in acts 520, 521 and 904. The new fees and their effective dates are as follows:

## Hunting Licenses

The new hunting license fees became effective September 1, of this year.

### Resident

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Basic .....    | \$10.50 |
| Big Game ..... | \$10.50 |
| Archery .....  | \$10.50 |

### Nonresident

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Basic (season) .....            | \$75.00 |
| Basic (3-day) .....             | \$40.50 |
| Big Game .....                  | \$40.50 |
| Archery .....                   | \$10.50 |
| 3-day migratory game bird ..... | \$25.00 |

**Game breeder** ..... \$25.00

Current reciprocal agreements and other substantive regulations remain unchanged.

## Motorboat Registration Fees

New motorboat registration fees become effective October 1, of this year.

### Initial 3-year period

|                                       |         |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Dealers: (Demonstrators)              |         |
| each certificate .....                | \$50.00 |
| Livery: (Rentals)                     |         |
| each certificate .....                | \$15.00 |
| General: (All other motorboats) ..... | \$15.00 |
| Transfer of ownership .....           | \$5.00  |
| Duplicate certificate .....           | \$5.00  |

### Renewals (3-years)

|               |         |
|---------------|---------|
| Dealers ..... | \$50.00 |
| Livery .....  | \$10.00 |
| General ..... | \$10.00 |

## Commercial Fishing Licenses

The entire commercial licensing structure was revamped. The new structure, in addition to raising much needed additional revenue, greatly simplifies the existing maze of commercial licenses. The new licenses take effect January 1, 1987, are good for the calendar year and may be purchased from October 1 of the preceeding year and any time during the license year.

Under the new system, all commercial fishermen taking fish, including bait species or possessing fish in the state or using commercial gear for which a recreational license has not been provided must purchase a Commercial Fisherman's License, a Gear License(s) and if fishing below the saltwater line, a Vessel License.

### Commercial Fisherman's License

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Resident .....    | \$55.00  |
| Nonresident ..... | \$105.00 |

### Vessel License

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| Resident .....    | \$15.00 |
| Nonresident ..... | \$60.00 |

### Commercial Gear License

#### Resident

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Butterfly nets (per net) ..... | \$25.00 |
| Crab traps .....               | \$25.00 |
| Gill nets .....                | \$25.00 |
| Hoop nets .....                | \$25.00 |

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Oyster dredge* (per dredge) ..... | \$25.00  |
| Oyster tong* (per tong) .....     | \$30.00  |
| Purse/menhaden seine .....        | \$505.00 |
| Seines .....                      | \$25.00  |
| Slat traps .....                  | \$25.00  |
| Trammel nets .....                | \$25.00  |
| Trawls (per trawl) .....          | \$25.00  |

#### **Nonresident**

|                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Butterfly nets (per net) .....    | \$100.00   |
| Crab traps .....                  | \$100.00   |
| Gill nets .....                   | \$100.00   |
| Hoop nets .....                   | \$100.00   |
| Oyster dredge* (per dredge) ..... | \$100.00   |
| Oyster tong* (per tong) .....     | \$120.00   |
| Purse/menhaden seine .....        | \$2,020.00 |
| Seines .....                      | \$100.00   |
| Slat traps .....                  | \$100.00   |
| Trammel nets .....                | \$100.00   |
| Trawls (per trawl) .....          | \$100.00   |

(\*denotes effective date of September 1, 1986)

#### **Wholesale/Retail Dealers License**

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Resident .....    | \$105.00 |
| Nonresident ..... | \$405.00 |

#### **Resident Wholesale/Retail Dealer/Restaurant**

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| and Retail Grocers only ..... | \$30.00 |
| Transport License .....       | \$30.00 |

### **Recreational Fishing Licenses**

The new recreational fishing licenses take effect July 1, 1987. In addition to fee changes, there are a number of substantive changes that will occur at that time. For the first time, persons between the ages of 16 and 60 who fish with a cane pole and live bait will also be required to purchase a license. Additionally, recreational fishermen using certain gear such as fish traps, nets and trawls will be required to purchase a recreational gear license.

#### **Fishing licenses**

##### **Resident**

|                                  |        |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| Basic .....                      | \$5.50 |
| Universal (Cane pole/line) ..... | \$2.50 |
| Saltwater .....                  | \$5.50 |

##### **Nonresident**

##### **Basic**

|              |         |
|--------------|---------|
| Season ..... | \$15.50 |
| 7-day .....  | \$10.50 |

##### **Saltwater**

|              |         |
|--------------|---------|
| Season ..... | \$25.50 |
| 7-day .....  | \$15.50 |

### **Recreational Gear Licenses**

Gear licenses listed below are required in addition to basic fishing license.

#### **Resident**

|                              |         |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Crab traps (10 traps) .....  | \$10.00 |
| Gill nets (150 ft.) .....    | \$25.00 |
| Hoop nets (5 nets) .....     | \$20.00 |
| Slat traps (5 traps) .....   | \$20.00 |
| Trammel nets (150 ft.) ..... | \$25.00 |
| Seines (150 ft.) .....       | \$25.00 |
| Trawls (16 ft. max.) .....   | \$25.00 |
| Oyster tong .....            | \$ 5.00 |

#### **Nonresident**

|                              |         |
|------------------------------|---------|
| Crab traps (10 traps) .....  | \$20.00 |
| Gill nets (150 ft.) .....    | \$50.00 |
| Hoop nets (5 nets) .....     | \$40.00 |
| Slat traps (5 traps) .....   | \$40.00 |
| Trammel nets (150 ft.) ..... | \$50.00 |
| Seines (150 ft.) .....       | \$50.00 |
| Trawls (16 ft. max.) .....   | \$50.00 |
| Oyster tong .....            | \$10.00 |

### **Recreational Fishing**

Act 844 stipulates that among licensed fishermen fishing south of the established "saltwater line," only those anglers fishing for saltwater species are required to purchase a Saltwater Angler's License.

Act 396 adds West and East Pass of the Calcasieu River and Oyster Bayou in Cameron Parish to the list of lakes and water bodies designated as saltwater areas.

### **Hunting**

Act 434 requires the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to set up rules and regulations to allow the secretary, in an emergency, to close an area affected by floodwaters to the hunting of quadrupeds.

Act 501 repeals the current provision prohibiting transportation of game quadrupeds across state lines.

### **Commercial Fishing**

Act 387 prohibits the use of purse seines in all saltwater areas of the state, including inside and outside state waters and Breton and Chandeleur sounds.

Act 660 prohibits the purchase of seafood by a restaurant or retail establishment from a fisherman not properly licensed to sell his catch.

Act 611 prohibits possession of red drum or spotted sea trout on board any vessel on which a purse seine is also on board.

Act 613 provides recreational and commercial limit of not more than two red drum exceeding thirty inches in length.

Act 919 prohibits wasting of fishery resources by harvesting of any fish for commercial purposes which results in the excessive killing of such fish.

Act 1016 authorizes the department to adopt rules and regulations establishing weight and quality standards for the packaging of seafood in Louisiana for wholesale or retail sale.

Act 570 gives the commission authority to close outside state waters to shrimp trawling from January 15 to April 15.

### **Miscellaneous**

Act 100 sets up the Louisiana Artificial Reef Development Program (See Rigs to Reefs, *La. Conservationist*, Jan./Feb. 1986).

Act 707 establishes the Louisiana Fur and Alligator Public Education and Marketing Fund and increased trapper license fees to fund the program. Also earmarked certain alligator tag fees to fund program.

Act 502 prohibits the unauthorized manufacture, sale and possession of badges, identification cards, and other insignia similar to that of the department.



# Rifle Primer

By Jerry McLain  
Hunter Safety Regional Coordinator  
Photography by Guy LaBranche

*Hunting is one of the greatest of sports, but it also carries with it some serious responsibilities. One of these is that hunters be competent in the use of their rifle, shotgun, bow or handgun.*

**H**UNTING SEASON will soon be here and Louisiana sportsmen will be taking their rifles out of the cabinets and heading for the woods. There will be visions of trophy bucks and venison roasts.

Some hunters will be successful. Others will open a can of pork and beans and mumble, "Wait till next year. My luck just wasn't any good this year."

I would be the last person in the world to deny the importance of luck in any hunting endeavor, but the fact is we can have a lot of control over our luck by properly preparing for the hunting season. Tops on this preseason preparation list is selecting and becoming competent with your firearm.

Since rifles are available in a wide variety of actions and calibers, selection can be a little confusing for the novice.

Rifle actions include bolt actions, lever actions, slide actions, semi-automatic, and break-open or falling-block single-shot. There is no definitive answer as to which action makes the best deer rifle. The one you like and are comfortable with is the one you should buy. If possible, time should be spent on a range looking at and trying out a variety of rifle actions before making your choice.

Rifles with all types of actions are available in a wide variety of calibers. Here a little careful consideration is needed in making a choice.

Most centerfire rifle cartridges, except the .22-caliber varmint loads, will do a passable job on whitetail deer. The main thing that needs to be considered in choosing a caliber in a deer rifle is the hunter.

There is no question that, with all other conditions the same, the more powerful a rifle is, the more likely it is to make a clean, quick kill. There is also no question that the more powerful a rifle is, the more difficult it is to shoot well. Virtually all experienced hunters agree that bullet placement is far more important than the power of the rifle. The important question, then, is how big a rifle can a hunter handle? This depends on a great many factors.

First, people vary greatly in their recoil tolerance. A good rule of thumb is that if you can fire five rounds off a rest, wait a few minutes then fire another five rounds without discomfort and without unexplained wild shots in the second group, you can handle that rifle without difficulty.

If the shoulder starts to get sore, and the recoil causes discomfort, then you are shooting too much rifle. This will lead to flinching and missed shots or, much worse, poorly placed shots that wound but don't kill cleanly. We have plenty of deer to hunt, but none to waste.

Beginning hunters, unless they are experienced shooters or are willing to spend some time shooting during

the off season, would usually be better off with a rifle such as the .243 Winchester or 6mm Remington rather than with the more powerful .30-06 or .308. There's nothing wrong with either of the two bigger cartridges; they're just harder for a beginner or occasional shooter to handle.

A good quality telescopic sight is a wise investment. For deer hunting, a lower-power scope is needed—from one to three power or a variable scope with a power range of one and one-half to five or two to seven. Hunting should be done with the lowest power setting. The field of view is much larger with the lower power and it is much easier to pick up the target in the scope. Besides, it's hard to place a shot if all you can see in the scope is hair.

Once the rifle is selected and equipped, it must be sighted in. This means, simply, to adjust the sights so that the point of impact of the bullet is at some specific place relative to the sights. In other words, to make the rifle hit where you want it to.



In boresighting, rifle is placed on rest and moved until target is centered in bore. Scope is then adjusted to match bore.

Rifles do not come from the factory sighted in, and the use of a bore scope won't zero it either. The only way to do it is to fire the rifle and adjust the sights from the actual placement of the bullets on the target.

This is not complicated. Use the sturdiest rest you can find. A bench-rest is best. The rifle forearm should be rested on sandbags, or some sort of pad.

Set up a large target at 25 yards. If possible, look down the bore of the rifle and adjust the scope so that it is pointed to the same place on the target as the bore. This is called "bore sighting."

Fire a three-shot group, then pick out the center of the group. Wild, unexplained stray shots should be discarded. Measure the distance in inches from the group center to the vertical line drawn through the center of the target. That distance is the windage correction. Next, measure the distance from the group center to the horizontal line through the center of the target. That distance is the elevation correction.



In the standing position, left, rifle should be supported by bone structure as much as possible. The left elbow should be directly beneath rifle and close to the body. When using improvised rest, center, never let any part of the rifle touch a hard, rigid object while firing. If you do, the rifle will bounce away from it on firing, causing a missed shot. Shooting technique from a tree stand, right, is similar in many ways to offhand or standing position shooting. It's a good idea for a tree stand hunter to be proficient in shooting from both shoulders.

Most sights and virtually all scopes are calibrated in minutes of angle, or fractions of a minute. A minute of angle is one-fourth inch at 25 yards and one inch at 100 yards. The instructions that come with the scope will tell you exactly what your scope calibration is.

Make the necessary windage and elevation corrections on your scope and fire another three-shot group. Once the rifle is zeroed at 25 yards, it should be on the paper at 100 yards. Just set up a target there, and repeat the procedure.

The zero should be checked before each hunting trip, because several factors can change the point of impact of the bullet.

Finally, all hunters should practice with their rifle. They can join a club that operates a range or go to a public range. Several excellent publications are available from the National Rifle Association on rifle shooting and these are a good investment. No matter how much shooting experience you have, you can always pick up some pointers from a good shooting manual. Another good way to improve is to practice with an experienced shooter and have them critique your position and technique.

Hunting is one of the greatest of all sports, but it also carries with it some serious responsibilities. One

of these is that hunters be competent in the use of their rifle, shotgun, bow or handgun. It is extremely important that hunters place their shots correctly. We all want a quick, clean, humane kill.

Don't ever forget that if we miss that deer, the bullet may travel a long way before coming to rest, creating a very real safety hazard.

Good public ranges are available, and there are several gun clubs around with excellent ranges. A little time spent on the range in the off season will go a long way toward improving our luck once the season opens.

Besides, shooting is fun.

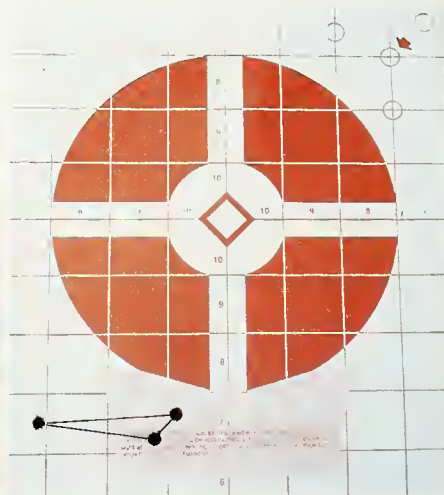
*Free shooting ranges are maintained at two Wildlife Management Areas by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.*

*At the Sherburne WMA near Krotz Springs in the Atchafalaya Basin, a 100-yard big-bore rifle range is open to the public from 1 p.m. until dark every Sunday and Thursday. At the Pearl River WMA east of Slidell, range hours are noon until dark on Saturdays only.*

*Both facilities may be used only when LDWF-certified instructors are present.*



You don't need special tripods or sandbags to zero in a rifle. A jacket or soft gun case can be rolled up and used as a front rest, and the buttstock can be supported by the left hand as shown.



Rifles with light recoil, left, can be fired in a free recoil, with rifle supported on tripod and sandbags only. The shooter should not touch the rifle except at the trigger. Rifles of heavier recoil, or using an improvised rest should be held as shown at center, with the butt against the shoulder, hand on grip and the cheek on the stock. Sight adjustments should be based on the center of a 3 shot group. Horizontal correction is called windage, vertical is termed elevation.

# Birding with Blue

By Blue Watson

THERE ARE more than 300 species of hummingbirds on this little planet of ours and they are all restricted to the western hemisphere.

Further, the vast majority of those birds are found in the tropics although the breeding range of a very few extend as far north as Alaska and as far south as Tierra del Fuego.

Hummingbirds range in size from the giant 8 inch Andean species *Patagonia gigas* to the 2 inch Cuban bee hummingbird *Calypte helena*, the smallest bird in the world. The average size of hummingbirds is rather small and is in the range of 3-4 inches in length.

Of the 300 odd species known, only one, *Archilochus colubris*, the ruby-throated hummingbird, is found in the eastern United States. This tiny (3¾ in.) spritlike bird is not much bigger than a large insect. In fact, John James Audubon compared the bird to a large Sphinx moth.

The ruby-throated belly is white and its back is iridescent green. The adult male has a ruby-red throat which flashes brightly when the sun strikes it, but the female's throat is white. The male hummingbird's tail is forked and the tail feathers are uniformly dark to the tip. The female's tail is blunt with the tail feathers tipped in white.

The hummingbird has a long, thin bill and a protrusible, tubular tongue both of which are ideally adapted for sipping nectar from flowers. Thus, the hummer is commonly regarded as strictly a nectar feeder. That is not the case, however. Stomach content analyses have revealed that a considerable part of the bird's diet consists of insects.

The hummingbird's legs and feet are not ideally suited to perching as are the Passerine birds, but this has not proven to be a disadvantage.



*Ruby-throated hummingbird*

In fact the bird has developed a most remarkable compensatory mechanism which allows it to feed while virtually suspended in air. The hummers are also the only birds that can fly backward as well as hover. This feat is accomplished because of the ability of the hummer to precisely control the pitch and rapidity of beat of its narrow and powerful wings. The wing movement rate has been measured at between 60 to 75 beats per second causing them to appear as a blur. Incidentally, the name hummingbird derives from the humming sound produced by the rapid beating of the wings.

Hummingbirds are extremely pugnacious, particularly during the breeding season, and will fearlessly attack intruders many times their own size. Hummers are also intolerant of members of their own species, so much so that the more hummers there are together, the more nervous, irritable and hostile they become. I have observed the birds in my own backyard sitting patiently upon a twig in the tree watching the feeder from above. At the approach of another hummer, the watcher dives like a feathered bullet at the intruder driving it from the feeder and chasing it some distance. The guard then returns to its "post" and continues its vigil. Occasionally it will drop quickly down for a brief snack of sugar water and return to its perch.

Hummingbirds, however, are very tolerant of the presence of

man, almost to the point of tameness. Therefore, they are easily attracted to one's yard with artificial feeders containing sugar water. Many types of feeders are commercially available and most of them resemble red or red and yellow flowers.

The nest of the hummer is unique. It is generally placed well out on the limb sufficiently high above the ground to protect it from predation from that quarter while still being covered by leaves and branches above. Bradford Torrey described the nest of the hummingbird as, "a model of artistic workmanship." The nest is a small compact mass approximately 2 inches in diameter and an inch deep. It is generally lined with soft plant down and covered externally with lichen. The entire nest is held together and secured to a small limb (generally ½ inch in diameter) with spider webs.

The courtship flight of the male ruby-throat is a fascinating display. The female sits demurely by while the male flies before her in a wide swinging, pendulum like "dance," buzzing at his potential mate with each swing.

The hummingbird regularly lays two pure white eggs that measure 12 × 9 mm or about the size of a pea. Incubation takes about 12-14 days and the young are fledged within 2-3 weeks. During the period that the young are confined to their nest they are fed by regurgitation.

The ruby-throated hummingbird appears to be relatively fastidious in maintaining the nest's interior. Nest cleaning is accomplished by the female removing the droppings of the young and placing them in a line on the branch just above the nest. The reason for this behavior is not immediately apparent.

The ruby-throat, as with many other bird species is migratory. As cold weather approaches, our hummingbirds fly to Mexico. There they avoid the rigors of winter and the absence of flowers and insects. But when the weather moderates, they follow the flowers north once again to invade our yards and gardens zipping from flower to flower and feeder to feeder and the cycle begins anew.



**Sept. 27, 1986**



### Sportsmen's Day

September 27 is National Hunting and Fishing Day. Sportsmen around the country will stage events to generate an interest in conservation and an increased awareness of the role that sportsmen play in this nation's conservation efforts.

In anticipation of the commemorative, students from grades 5-12 are invited to compete in a national poster contest. In 1986, among the thousands of participants, four Louisiana students won awards: Jason Self of Pioneer won an Honorable Mention; Chi Truong of Crowley, Violet Walker of Kenner and Melvin Lemmons Jr. of Natchitoches all won Merit Awards.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries offices in Monroe and Minden have traditionally staged very successful Hunting and Fishing Days and will once again be sponsoring extravaganzas of outdoor skill activities, demonstrations in safety and woodlore, and opportunities to taste every imaginable game animal.

This year the Baton Rouge office will put on its own version of the gala. At the comfortable, spacious and convenient Waddill Tract, hunters and fishermen can anticipate an event more than adequate to suit the occasion.

Information on how to sponsor or enter the 1987 National Hunting and Fishing Day Poster Contest or stage a celebration of your own is available free from NHF Day headquarters, P.O. Box 1075, Riverside, CT 06878.

# Conservationotes

## Citizen Effort Keeps River Scenic

Scouts, church groups, college students and families teamed up to pick the river banks clean at the twelfth annual Whiskey Chitto River work trip last October. The river is one of 50 stretches included in Louisiana's Natural and Scenic Streams System. During the summer months 200-300 canoes put-in here every Saturday, not to mention the drive up campers who relax on the riverbanks. So come Fall and the end of the canoe season, Joan and Dick Williams, proprietors of local outfitter Pack and Paddle, stage the clean up to beautify a very popular twelve mile run in Allen Parish.

Just since the year before last the number of canoes, which they provide free of charge along with a shuttle service and garbage bags, doubled from 40 to 80. Last October some 160 helpers traveled the wide easy southwest river, culled every downed tree for debris and scanned every sandbar for leftovers. Messages wafted downriver like, "There's a can over in the tree trunk." And

a father/son duo took on an out-of-the-way log: dad performed a high wire act balancing along the trunk, as he pitched cans and bottles into the canoe held steady against the current by his son. One couple from Eunice was particularly diligent. Errol actually shimmed up a tree to pull down a kitchen chair somehow caught up in the branches during high water.

Everyone remained in good spirits while skimming the urban silt from the river's banks. As they approached the take-out, their canoes laden with lawn-sized trash bags, the clean up crew dug in and competition sparked as the spunkier of the bunch raced one another to the "finish line."

On this coming October 11 Pack and Paddle is planning another clean up. Anyone wishing to join in may call the Lafayette store at (318) 232-5854 or the Lake Charles location at (318) 478-9298.

Also, the outfitter will provide canoes and livery for any group that would like to run their own clean up on the Whiskey Chitto on any week day of the year.



Naturalists from Lafayette's Catholic Deaf Center skim the urban silt from the riverbanks after the summer rush of activity.

## GCCA Donates Night Scopes

Thanks to the Gulf Coast Conservation Association, state wildlife agents patrolling the waterways of southeast Louisiana are armed with a potent new tool—night-vision scopes.

Two of the military-style scopes were donated to the Enforcement Division of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries by GCCA's Bayou Chapter.

Angelle said the scopes would be effective against all nighttime poaching operations but especially against users of illegal gill nets in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes.

The gift scopes were turned over to Capt. Roy Chauvin by chapter president Emmett Glynn at a GCCA fund-raising affair in Thibodaux.

## Wetland Managers Meet

The Association of State Wetland Managers will convene in New Orleans to examine the measures presently in place for the purpose of easing the loss of the nation's wetlands. The three day seminar is slated for October 8-10 at the International Hotel and will include several one day field trips to choose from on October 11.

For registration information and the facts on utilization of an excellent display area, contact Jon Kusler, Association of State Wetland Managers, Box 528, Chester, Vermont 05143. Phone: 802-875-3897. (\$165 covers the three days of sessions, two lunches and a copy of the proceedings.)

## Wildfowl Festival Set

The 1986 Louisiana Wildfowl Carvers Festival will be held September 26-28 at the Health and Physical Education Building on the campus of the University of New Orleans in New Orleans.

Featured at the festival will be demonstrations on carving, painting, and burning, and decoy painting and head whittling contests. The festival will also feature exhibits of old and new decoys along with competition in a number of categories including decorative decoy pairs, decorative miniature, decorative lifesize and shooting stool.

Some 300 to 400 carvers and exhibitors are expected to participate. Admission to the public is \$3 for adults and \$1 for children.



## Communicators Garner Three "Bests"

The writers and photographers of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries garnered three of the ten Outdoor Ethics Communication Awards conferred by the Izaak Walton League of America. The league annually conducts a national communications competition on outdoor ethics in order to recognize "exceptional contributions to the nationwide effort to enhance the quality of outdoor recreation through improved behavior by all outdoor users."

At the awards ceremony, staged at the August conference of the Association for Conservation Information (ACI), three "bests" were bestowed on the department's communication specialists: Best Graphics for a poster entitled "Be a Sportsman...Even When No One is Looking," Best Radio Public Service Announcement for "Real Hunters Wear Blaze," and Best Publicity Campaign for "Hunter Safety: A Tradition Worth Passing On."

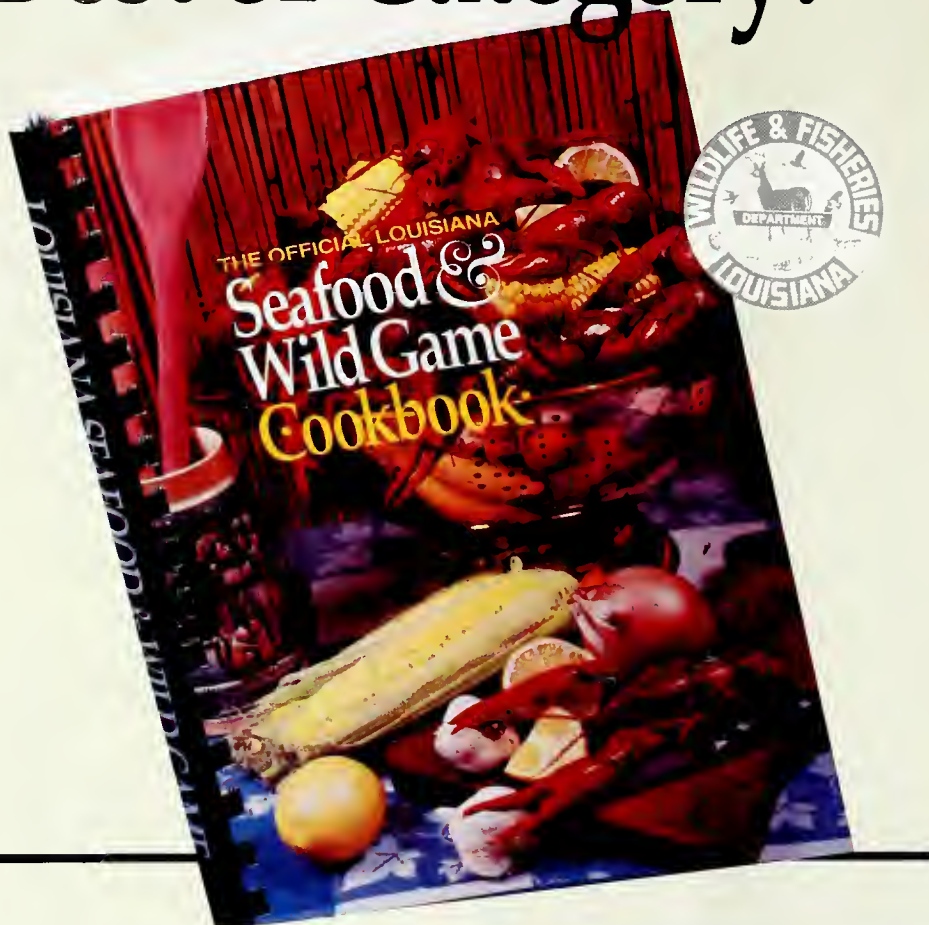
The league, which defines itself as "defenders of soil, air, woods, water and wildlife," was founded in 1922 by fishermen and has a membership now of 50,000 throughout the United States. Its programs are representative of the gamut of natural resource interests and include Save Our Streams, Conservation, and Outdoor Ethics (of which the awards program is an important part).

The Outdoor Ethics Program embraces the idea that the key to preserving hunting and fishing as the pleasurable sports which they rightly are is the promotion of a mutual respect between the sportsmen and the general public. Public outreach via, for instance, radio, television and newspaper, the league believes, are the best vehicles of reminding the hunter of expected ethics in the wild and educating the nonhunter of the existence of such a code. Hence, the significance of rewarding those who have demonstrated excellence in their field to the purpose of furthering this worthy cause.



**Good Eatin' for Camp Kids:** Wildlife agents present an ice chest full of sac-a-lait—part of a donation totaling 600 pounds—to Belinda J. Hosetter of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections and Warden Abe Ross (in dark suit) of the Livingston Parish Prison. Trustees at the prison cleaned the fish, and it was then turned into tasty dinners for underprivileged children who were spending a week at Camp Singing Waters near Holden. The fish were confiscated from suspected poachers by the Enforcement Division of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Here, the division is represented by Maj. Jackie Whitehead (left) and Capt. Wayne Brescher.

# Best of Category!



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But someone else is equally impressed with the tasteful publication. The Printing Industry of the South, Inc. conferred its top book printing award to Bourque Printing for its excellent craftsmanship in producing the cookbook. A panel of commercial artists, printers and the chairman of Printing Industries of America judged the volume Best of Category from among 1,000 competing entries for excellence in printing and design.

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*All profits from cookbook sales go toward wildlife conservation efforts.*

# Bayou Kitchen

by Wayne Miller



## Teal with Saffron Rice

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup olive oil  
3 teal, cut into serving pieces  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups tomatoes, chopped  
2 onions, chopped  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup celery, finely chopped  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup green onions, chopped  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup green peas (fresh or frozen)  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup pimiento, chopped  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup parsley, chopped  
2 cups rice  
Pinch saffron (more to taste)  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cumin  
2 cups mushrooms, sliced  
2 cups chicken stock  
2 cups white wine (more if needed)  
salt and pepper to taste

Brown teal in olive oil. Remove teal to warm plate. Add chopped onions, celery and tomatoes to remaining oil. Cook until onions are clear then add mushrooms and cook a few minutes longer. Add rice, saffron, cumin,

stock and wine. Bring to boil. Add green onions, parsley, peas, pimiento and teal. Lower heat (medium low) and cover pot. Cook approximately 20 minutes or until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender.

## Braised Teal

4 teal, skinned  
1 cup celery  
1 cup bell pepper, chopped  
1 cup onion, chopped  
Salt and red pepper to taste  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup oil  
2 cups white wine  
Flour to thicken gravy

Wash and thoroughly dry teal. Season well inside and out with salt and red pepper and stuff with mixture of bell pepper and celery. Brown teal in heavy roasting pan in oil. Add wine and any remaining bell pepper and celery. Cook over low heat two or three hours. Thicken gravy with a

paste of flour mixed with wine. Serve with steamed rice.

## Broiled Breast of Teal

4 teal breasts  
6 tablespoons butter  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon white pepper  
2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup chopped parsley

Sauté mushrooms in 2 tablespoons butter. When nearly done, add chopped parsley. Reserve cooked mushrooms. Flatten each teal breast slightly with rolling pin. Melt remaining butter; add lemon juice and white pepper. Broil breasts 10 minutes on each side, brushing often with butter-lemon mixture. When nearly done, pour mushrooms over teal. Return to broiler to finish cooking and heat mushrooms. Add remaining basting sauce over all and top with more finely chopped parsley. Garnish with lemon slices.



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